

These notes from the Public Information session on Sept. 30, 2010 are provided for your convenience:

Present: Mike Armstrong, Karen Doyle, Marie Early, Cathryn Fadde, Anne Impellizzeri, Marshall Mermell, Anthony Phillips, Michael Reisman, Catharine Square. Ted Fink (GreenPlan, consultant to the Special Board)

Comments from Sept. 30, 2010 Public Information Meeting:

Q: (David Hardy) – Is the next meeting (on Oct. 7) a repeat of this meeting?

A: Yes, next time there will be a shorter discussion of the Comprehensive Plan (CP) with more time for Questions and Answers.

Q: (Rob Garnsey – PCNR) – Can you describe the process that will occur?

A: On Oct. 14, there will be a Public Hearing. Then the Special Board will vote and (if the vote is affirmative) send the CP to the Village Board. The Village Board has many things/reviews they can request. The Village Board will decide on their own schedule. Then, the Village Board must have a Public Hearing and a SEQRA review.

Q: Must there be a state review?

A: Yes, that would be the SEQRA review

Q: So, when will the SEQRA review occur?

A: That is up to the Village Board, but we hope it will be sooner rather than later.

A: (Michael Reisman) – The SEQRA (State Environmental Review Act) review is done by the village

A: (Ted Fink) – The Putnam County Planning Board must also review the CP; there is no approval authority but they can make recommendations if they feel the plan has county-wide impacts.

Q: (Mike Turton) – The CP says “consider” a lot. Will the language be made more firm?

A: It is up to the Village Trustees as to how they wish to frame the final recommendations on an issue. They may decide they want to be more direct and require that something be done, or they may say something softer; they may specify the timing or schedule. To some degree, the Special Board has thrown a light on something that needs to be addressed and have put a framework for how to look at that issue for the Village Trustees to start the discussion about that. In some cases we don’t have the full solution, we have an idea that make some sense but an engineering study or a traffic study may be required before a full solution can be identified. So until the full implications of the issue are understood, that is why the language says “consider”.

A: (Bruce Campbell) – The Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) can assist the Village Board in addressing the actions, and in making sure things are being done.

A: (Mike Armstrong): We see the CPAC as working at the direction of the Village Trustees; the Village Trustees would set priorities and there would be a dialogue going on, a very close working relationship between the CPAC and the Village Trustees to identify specific things – an engineering study, to ensure that the things that are needed to be done to make something happen, are being done. There's a lot of work to be done here – for example, organizing subcommittees with specific expertise such as information technology, to look into the computer usage within the village government.

A: (Anne Impellizzeri) – The Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee would help the Village Board. The Village Board can decide what they want the CPAC to do.

Q: (Dick Weisbrod) – Is this (the CP) going to go on, or is it done now?

A: There will be annual reviews (are we making progress) and 5-year reviews (does this plan still make sense or should there be changes to the plan). There must be priority setting between the Village Trustees and the CPAC group. This is a changeable and adaptable dynamic process which will be influenced as resources are available.

Q: (Dick Weisbrod) – Are all the Objectives equally important?

A: The Village Trustees will set priorities; some are broader, some are more keystone. However, we tried to organize the layout of the plan to some degree to show some of the Objectives are more critical than others, have more urgency, more depends on them being accomplished, have more financial ramifications – the fire house, the dam project. Yes, the Objectives do vary in their importance, their priority, their urgency. The setting of that is the discussion between the CPAC and the Village Trustees at the direction of the Village Trustees.

Q: (Rob Garnsey) – The plan sounds very exciting. Can you elaborate on volunteers?

A: One thing that has become very apparent is that this Village is full of very talented people. In some cases they have spare time to do things. They know computers, they know graphic arts, they know music – they know a lot of different things that they can bring their knowledge to help solve problems in the Village. This is an ambitious plan because the Special Board saw that this community had people who were ready to volunteer which fits very well with the character of this community – there is a very practical, down to earth character to this community who get things done through sharing, neighborliness, they take care of each other. We felt that by being more ambitious in this plan, it would help pull the community together.

Q: (Dan Wright) – I like to sit on the benches in front of the Village Hall and the Fire Department; it's a slice of Americana. If the Village Hall and the Fire Department are moved to Butterfield, since Main Street is the epicenter of all we cherish in this town, are we going to lose something, are we going to lose the qualities that make it such a special place? What do you think?

A: This is a key issue. We don't know what would happen but we think that Main Street does need those anchors, the reasons for people to use Main Street. Part of the answer is what would replace the Village Hall, what would replace the fire house if they were moved to Butterfield. There may be ways of

ameliorating the problem, there may be ways of putting new functions in there like a community center that people use actively to keep Main Street real, to keep it very active so that it is not just visitors coming in using the street. It needs to be very carefully thought through – if we use the Butterfield property, how do we keep Main Street vital.

Q: (Dan Wright) – Couldn't the current Firehouse be rebuilt or enlarged on its current site?

A: There was work done to evaluate the Firehouse on that footprint. The building has serious problems. Our assessment is that there is a need for a new firehouse, the site is not adequate and there is a need for a new firehouse. The Fire Company has sought new facilities for years. There was a study done about 5 years ago to see if the current site could be reconfigured, but it seems to us that it is just not practical.

A: (Marie Early) - The current Firehouse has no room for expansion and cannot currently accommodate a ladder truck.

Q: (Pete Smith) –Relative to the water walkway, there's a proposed loop that gets to Stony Point. I sat on Fair Street and I saw hundreds of day-trippers getting off Metro North this past Saturday on their way to Breakneck. There is a precarious walk along 9D and even through the tunnel and it is harrowing from a pedestrian's point of view. There is no real safe access.

A: Yes, that is part of the reason for looking at this loop. There was a study done in 2007; it would be a \$3,000,000 project to address that safety issue. The problem is that the DOT would not allow the construction along the road. So the solution would have to go along the railroad or some other route. It is one of the most popular hiking destinations in North America. It is a tremendous opportunity for the Village to try to keep people moving through the village and past the businesses where they may spend more, have more accommodations in the village so they may stay overnight and make an active contribution to the village's economy. This could be a similar opportunity to the walkway bridge in Poughkeepsie over the Hudson. This could be the right kind of opportunity for the village where people come off the train and do not crowd the village with cars and bring economic life to the village and is also a benefit to residents who want to go to the trailheads too.

A: (Anne Impellizzeri) – The Village line falls far south of the trails so reaching beyond would require the cooperation of some other agencies, with other communities - the Greenway which Marshall is knowledgeable about. The big challenge is how to cross the tracks if you make the loop. There is plenty that can be done with RiverWalk and connections to the river, multiple paths through the village, without going beyond, without worrying about a new railroad crossing but one possibility that is suggested, long term, clearly expensive, would require outside financing, would be to build a causeway that would take advantage of the current bridge but the plan also suggests other ways of crossing the tracks in order to make a loop.

A: (Marshall Mermell) – I'm on the Philipstown Greenway Committee. A few years ago, The Philipstown Greenway Committee received a Greenway grant to issue an engineering study, which was completed. The engineering study created two potential opportunities but it is outside the realm of Cold Spring. But

it starts at the light at the intersection of Rt. 9D and Rt. 301 and goes north for hikers, bicyclists and automobile traffic. The other component negotiated with and is still in negotiations with DOT. DOT had come back with a comprehensive concept but then the state was broke so I don't know where it stands at this point. That's the last that I was aware of.

Q: (Nat Prentice) – What does “keep Main Street real” mean?

A: (Anne Impellizzeri) – That is in essence the question that Dan addressed. “real”, another term is “authentic” and another term is “civic”. It is a question of keeping activities on Main Street that draw residents to it as opposed to a museum village, as opposed to a simple shopping destination. A place where the real necessities of life take place.

Q: (John Teagle) – Congratulations and thank you! You're not elected and you're not compensated. Once adopted by the Village Board, legally, how quickly can change it, how drastically can they change it? Can a new village administration drastically change it (the actions in the CP)?

A: (Ted Fink) – The short answer is Yes, but they have to go through the same process that the Village is going through. You can't just do it, you can't make an amendment to a Comprehensive Plan without going through a Public Hearing process, without referring it to the Putnam County Planning Board, without conducting a State Environmental Quality Review. The Village Board has the ability to prepare a Comprehensive Plan on their own, or a town board, or a city council; they can also delegate that responsibility to a planning board or they can create a special board made up of citizens and perhaps planning board members, zoning board members and other interested parties much as the Village Board did with the Special Board here. But ultimately, responsibility for a Comprehensive Plan falls on a legislative board but there is a process in place that ensures that there is public participation in it. New York State and Village law mandates that there be public participation in the preparation of a comprehensive plan. So that it can't be done in a back room so to speak. And there are advantages to having a solid comprehensive plan in place – not only does a comprehensive plan guide village decisions on a wide range of issues, it also guides the decision making of other agencies, for instance, the DOT – if they were to propose any changes to any state highways within the Village or if the county wanted to put a new facility of some sort within the Village, they have to consider the Comprehensive Plan in their capital projects. So it is a very powerful tool for negotiating with other agencies. Also, in terms of some of the other implementation items, in terms of getting funding for various projects, if a municipality has a comprehensive plan that is current and in place, for the funding sources, they automatically bump it up a notch because that says to any agency that wants to invest money in a community that that municipality has taken a long view and has created a vision and has a policy for the future

Q: (Stephanie Hawkins) - Philipstown has a Comprehensive Plan and zoning changes, now Cold Spring is working on a Comprehensive Plan and village zoning laws. Is this a stand-alone document that has yet to be massaged into laws?

A: The conversion into laws needs to be done. This is a more general plan. We did look at the Philipstown 2020 Plan as we prepared this one. The Philipstown Plan does not govern Cold Spring; they are separate. But we are in a much earlier phase; Philipstown completed its 2020 Plan about 3 or 4

years ago and they've been going through the making of the zoning law for the last 3 years. We will be moving into that phase in Cold Spring, assuming the Comprehensive Plan is approved, after this is finished.

A: (Michael Reisman): Everything in here is specific to Cold Spring; nothing in here is cookie cutter "Oh, Philipstown is doing this so we're going to do it as well". Obviously, there are very different issues facing this Village versus Philipstown at large so what we did as part of the process is look at the provisions of zoning and land use as a whole with a lot of help from GreenPlan in terms of general, big picture suggestions for making changes mostly in the sense of reconciling what is in the laws right now with what the vision and goals of the Village are – what's missing, what could be streamlined, what could be improved, so the next stage would be taking these suggestions and changing the laws.

Q: (Stephanie Hawkins): Anne, I think you had pointed out at an earlier gathering about zoning in Philipstown....

A: (Anne Impellizzeri): I want to modify that comment. That is a comment that has been made about the current zoning in Cold Spring, it is not a comment with regards to Philipstown, and it is just to understand how we got to the zoning that we have, and in the 60's and 70's – there are people here who know a lot more about this than I, but zoning was developed in communities across the country and they wanted to find out how they do it and they found models of zoning for suburban communities where the car was dominant. Not communities like Cold Spring that grew up before the car. And there have been a lot of changes in our zoning to adapt to this changed world but we're looking at Cold Spring zoning, it is not a question of Philipstown zoning. Ted might like to comment....

Q: (Marshall Mermell) – Ted, can you explain form-based zoning versus use-based zoning?

A: (Ted Fink) – There have been different types of zoning that have been developed. Zoning has been around for close to 100 years now. Form-based zoning has been around for only about 20 years. The way that zoning developed - which was essentially to segregate uses. Its origins came about really in an attempt to try to ensure that industrial uses didn't negatively impact on residential uses and there was a great concern for property values. And unless there was some control over what uses were established in what locations, it would become a hodge-podge of different uses. So many municipalities went with the establishment of zoning. It led eventually to the evolution of conventional suburban type of zoning where you have residential neighborhoods here, you have a commercial district there, and you have an industrial district there. Everything was separated. That is not the way that traditional municipalities, like Cold Spring, developed. Cold Spring developed way before there was zoning. There was nothing in place to guide what went where. But it was all done on the basis of what was convenient to people because people had to walk to get to school, they had to walk to get to work, they had to walk for shopping. So everything was within a 5 to 10 minute walk. The model of a village, as with Cold Spring, was about one square mile area. Within that area the center of the community was no more than that 5 to 10 minute walk. You couldn't replicate the development that Cold Spring went through today under the current zoning because it is based upon that suburban model where everything is segregated, everything is based upon the auto rather than pedestrians. And so as an attempt to find some solution

to this, to ensure that uses that were compatible with one another could be properly mixed, there were a number of planners who came up with so called form-based zoning back in the 1980's. It has spread throughout the country. It has become a much better way to ensure that the overall form, the overall character of a community can be preserved and protected. The emphasis is on the building form, building mass, a building's relationship to the street, so that you can rebuild or build from scratch Cold Spring even if maybe it is somewhere out in a green field. The idea with form-based regulations is to ensure that any new development that happens here in Cold Spring, or redevelopment, if it is based upon these form-based standards, that they would be able to duplicate the type of historical and traditional development that occurred within the Village. The emphasis is less on the use, the impact of the use is more important from a regulatory standpoint than the actual use itself; ensuring that there are compatible uses, and that neighboring uses are not going to create nuisances. If you want to do some research, there is a model called "SmartCode", it was developed by the Congress for New Urbanism, I believe their website is www.cnu.org. They have lots of examples, you can see visually how many communities have been developed using these form-based zoning regulations. There is another website called "formbasedinstitute" giving examples of form-based zoning.

The session adjourned at 9:20pm.